

America On the Move® FAMILY PROGRAM TOOLBOX

100

ways to Surround Your Family with Success

Moving more and eating healthfully are easier when you create an environment that supports your efforts. This tip sheet provides simple, practical ideas to help you and your family lead a healthier lifestyle at home, work, school, and in your community.

Success At Home

Adapting your home environment to reinforce your family's active, healthy lifestyle is easy when you use these ideas:

CREATE A "MOVE MORE" ENVIRONMENT:

1. Run errands without using the car — go to the bank, video store, dry cleaner, or convenience store on foot
2. Place your stationary bike or treadmill in a convenient place and set specific times to use it, like in the morning before work or school, or while watching your favorite TV programs
3. Leave the room during TV commercials. Use the break to put away dishes and laundry, or accomplish other tasks that add movement and help boost your daily steps
4. Walk while talking on the phone. Take your cell phone with you on a walk around the neighborhood
5. Make a morning or evening walk as regular a part of your routine as brushing your teeth
6. Make TV time work for you and your family. Everyone can increase their physical activity by jogging in place, doing jumping jacks, crunches, push-ups, and other exercises that use body weight

7. If you live close enough, walk your kids to school. It's a fun physical activity for people of all ages, and helps conserve natural resources and protect the environment

8. Spend leisure time with your family by being active. Play tag, basketball, soccer, or ride bikes

9. Plan an active morning to keep from hitting the snooze button. Move your clock so you have to get out of bed to turn off the alarm. Have clothes out and ready for your walk or other activity, and post a reminder to yourself so you'll see it when you wake up

10. Most people have the urge to be a couch potato now and then. If you're feeling fatigued at the end of the day, go for a quick walk as soon as you get home. You'll feel more energized and will be less likely to spend the evening on the sofa

11. Find a walking partner or "buddy." Walking with someone else can help you stay committed and offer enjoyable company

12. Try walking 2 to 3 hours before going to sleep. Gently stretch your muscles after your walk, then engage in a relaxing activity like reading or taking a bath. You'll sleep better at night and feel healthier all day

13. Along with your other weekly activities, write down times for physical activity (for individuals or as a family) and post a schedule. Even if you don't normally keep a weekly schedule, designate a few times to move more

14. Piggyback short walks onto other times of day — for example, plan to get in 10 minutes when you wake up, 10 minutes at lunch, and 10 more when you get home from work or school

15. Walk around your neighborhood while transporting your imagination with books on tape, a fun CD, or a customized "move more" playlist on your MP3 player. You'll find yourself walking farther than normal when you're engrossed in a great story or engaging music

FILL YOUR KITCHEN WITH SMART FOOD CHOICES:

16. Stock your cupboards with convenient low-calorie snacks like pretzels, rice cakes, low-fat popcorn, and graham crackers

17. Pre-wash mini carrots, celery, grapes, and apples for quick snacks

18. Have dairy products on hand like low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese

19. Satisfy chocolate cravings with low-fat pudding cups or frozen fudge bars

20. Substitute ground turkey for beef. It decreases the calories, fat, and cholesterol of burgers or pasta dishes without sacrificing taste

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21. Keep canned and frozen vegetables as quick side dishes or for pastas, soups, casseroles, and pizza

22. Avoid large packages of chips, cookies, and similar snacks. Instead, buy a single serving when a craving strikes

23. Add black, garbanzo, or kidney beans to pasta dishes for more flavor, fiber, and protein

24. Choose cuts of beef that are labeled round, lean, chuck, or loin

25. Select no-sugar-added drinks like flavored water, iced tea, and low-fat milk to keep hydrated without adding calories

26. Buy healthy, convenient breakfast foods like cereal, yogurt, fruit, and oatmeal. Studies show that most people who maintain weight loss eat breakfast regularly

27. Make a “healthy snack” shelf at your children’s eye-level in the refrigerator. Load up on fruits, vegetables, low-fat yogurt, and string cheese

28. Encourage yourself and your family to drink water as an easy and refreshing alternative to sugary, higher calorie drinks. Store pre-cut lemon or lime wedges in your refrigerator or freezer for a refreshing addition to any glass

29. Plant a garden or a few pots. Not only will you get the physical benefits of gardening and the fun of sharing the accomplishment with your kids, but you’ll be able to enjoy delicious, fresh produce, too

30. Place a bowl of fresh fruit in the center of your kitchen for easy access to a delicious, low-calorie, low-fat snack

31. Opt for smaller portions of snack foods such as crackers, cookies, popcorn, and pretzels. If you buy a larger bag, dish out single servings into plastic snack-bags

32. Plan your meals for the week. Take a few minutes to write a list before going to the grocery store. This will keep you from forgetting items you need, and prompt you to think of ingredients for your favorite quick and healthy recipes

33. Instead of frying food, cook on your broiler or grill

34. Make fresh fruit salads for dessert instead of baked goods or other sweets

35. Put lemon, lime, or vinegar on vegetable side dishes for seasoning

36. Make sure to have applesauce on hand. You can substitute it for the fat in baking recipes

PURCHASE THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR FOOD PREPARATION:

37. Steam vegetables to preserve nutrients and avoid added fat. Season with lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, or fresh herbs

38. Keep salads crispy by using a salad spinner. You’ll need less salad dressing when your greens aren’t coated with excess water

39. Stock your cabinets with nonstick pans and cooking spray

40. Spray pans and food with an oil mister. You’ll use less oil and save calories

41. Use silicone baking mats. These reusable, rubberized mats can be used with any baking sheet, and eliminate the need for greasing pans

42. When making homemade soups or sauces, use a skimmer to remove the fat that often gathers on top

43. Buy a salad dressing carafe and make your own low-fat dressing. It’s easy to do and you can make it to your own taste

ENJOY YOUR MEALS AND FEEL FULL ON FEWER CALORIES:

44. Savor your favorite food sparingly — there’s no need to deny yourself when you monitor serving size

45. Serve correct portion sizes before bringing dinner plates to the table to avoid overly large helpings and the temptation for seconds

46. Are you really hungry? Many people overeat when they are bored, lonely, or feeling stressed. Help your family find healthy substitutes to emotional eating like reading a book, talking to a friend, or going for a walk

47. Serve dinner on appetizer plates to control portions

48. Start meals with salad or broth-based soup. You’ll feel fuller and eat less of your main course

49. Freeze individual serving sizes of meals so you have a backup on busy days

50. Slow down! Put down your utensils between bites to slow your eating pace

51. Eat dinner at the table — talking with family members can help you avoid overeating before you feel full

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52. Listen to relaxing music while eating instead of sitting in front of the TV

53. If you tend to snack while watching late-night TV, tackle the junk mail, spend time on a hobby, or drink a soothing blend of tea instead

54. If you reach for food when you're angry, write down the reasons you feel upset, discuss the situation with a friend, or work toward resolving the source of your frustration

55. Pour individual servings of snacks into bowls instead of eating out of the bag or package

Success At Work and School

Even with a hectic schedule, these tips can help support your efforts to create a healthier work or school environment:

CHOOSE FOODS AND RESTAURANTS THAT SUPPORT YOUR EFFORTS:

56. Pack your lunch — homemade soups, sandwiches, and salads can be more healthful because you control the ingredients

57. If you can leave the office or campus, choose a lunch spot at least 1/2 mile away and enjoy a walk to and from to add an extra 2000 steps to your day

58. Planning a meeting or party? Serve bottled water, fresh fruit, vegetable trays, mini bagels, salads, and whole-grain sandwich breads

59. Grabbing breakfast on the run? Reach for healthy options — low-fat muffins, fresh fruit, smoothies, and water — instead of a donut and coffee

60. Form an office committee or work with the school administration to bring healthier foods to the cafeteria, such as whole grain tortilla wraps and a salad bar

61. Ask your vending company to stock healthier options like protein bars and baked chips

62. Keep foods away from your desk or locker and eat them at planned times to avoid unmindful snacking

63. Encourage healthy decisions, such as drinking water instead of soda with "point-of-decision" signs and slogans

64. Bring a fun water bottle to school or the office and make an effort to drink several glasses of water. Staying hydrated perks up your energy and curbs your hunger

65. Parties can be a healthy eating challenge. Bring a low-calorie/low-fat dish to share so you'll know there's at least one healthy option. Snack on baby carrots or a piece of fruit before leaving home to help curb your appetite

66. Bring a healthy mid-afternoon snack to the office or school, like low-fat yogurt or a piece of fruit, so you won't be tempted to visit the vending machine or fast-food chain

ACTIVATE STRATEGIES TO "FIT IN" MORE MOVEMENT:

67. Store a pair of comfortable shoes at the office or in your locker for walks around the building or outside during breaks

68. Suggest giving your office or school stairwell a makeover. Decorate the walls with motivating messages or photos, give it a fresh coat of paint, add air fresheners, and install brighter bulbs. Pleasant surroundings promote more frequent use

69. If you can, walk to work or school, or take public transportation and walk from your stop to your office or campus to increase daily steps

70. Use the bathroom, water fountain, and vending machine farthest from your desk or locker

71. Take short movement breaks — hand deliver documents to a coworker's desk, or take the long way to your next class

72. Use your pedometer to map out 2000-step walking routes around your building or campus

73. Encourage colleagues and teachers to hold meetings and classes while walking outside. Fresh air boosts creativity and the extra steps will add up

74. Be a role model! Encourage your co-workers and classmates to be more active and eat more healthfully by doing these things yourself

75. Store an exercise band in your desk or locker and take quick breaks to tone your body when you need a pickup

76. Host walking meetings when the group is small, or if you are meeting with just one other colleague

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77. If you are a decision maker, offer incentives to your employees, staff, or students for engaging in healthy lifestyles. Provide incentives for those who ride their bikes to work or school, or who increase their physical activity through a friendly competition, like the AOM Challenge

78. Encourage your co-workers or classmates to make healthy decisions such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator by posting fun, "point-of-decision" signs

79. Ask management or school administrators to promote wellness by encouraging employees or students to walk around the building during their lunch hour, or to take brief walking breaks

Success in Your Neighborhood

80. Make your neighborhood a safe place to be active. Petition your city for ample streetlights, bike lanes, sidewalks, stop signs, and well-marked crosswalks

81. Create paths that connect favorite neighborhood spots so you can be safe walking or biking to school, the park, the library, and the grocery store

82. Organize a coalition of neighborhood parents that can take turns walking kids to school. Instead of a carpool, host a walking pool

83. Encourage restaurants to invest in smaller containers or serving dishes (for example, giving patrons the option of ordering an 8oz soda instead of a larger size), or to offer calorie counts for each of their menu items

84. Encourage safety by getting a local bicycle shop to give free tutorials on bicycle safety at your next neighborhood meeting or summer get-together

85. Keep your neighborhood safe for active living by creating or strengthening your Neighborhood Watch group

86. Make your neighborhood safer for pedestrians by implementing "traffic calming" techniques, designed to influence motorists to drive more slowly. One way to do this is to plant trees near the street. This technique is designed to "narrow" a driver's field of vision, which causes them to slow down

87. Plant trees and flowers. Create a neighborhood that invites people to spend more time outside

88. Make your neighborhood foot-friendly for the aging population. Repair bumpy and broken sidewalks so older adults can easily navigate by foot. Provide safe resting spots (benches, picnic tables, etc.), easy-to-read signs, and well-lit streets and walking paths.

89. Does your city have enough green space? Parks and open space should be an essential component of all new community design

90. Start an urban garden. Not only will this get you moving, but you can enjoy the delicious fruits (and vegetables!) of your labor

91. Highlight your city's assets and get your community moving in the process. Does your city have a good collection of art galleries, historic homes, gardens, sculptures, or ghost stories? Organize a walking tour

92. Collaborate with local realty firms to include maps of parks, bike paths, and recreational facilities with their home sales materials

93. Encourage restaurants to offer menu items at 1/2 the usual portion size, or to box 1/2 the meal prior to serving

94. Encourage citizens to be active by placing bike racks on public buses

95. Encourage your local elected officials to implement "smart growth" strategies for healthy living. (More information can be found at <http://smartgrowth.org> or www.activelivingleadership.org)

96. Encourage developers in your community to build new communities and redevelop established communities for "mixed use," a term indicating that residential and commercial buildings exist in harmony with one another

97. Keep your community clean and clear of potential hazards such as snow and ice. Ask city administrators to consider sidewalks and bike paths as important as streets when it comes to removing debris and repairing cracks

98. Encourage your local newspaper to include a section on healthy living. A calendar of healthy living events could promote local races, farmers markets, and community walks

99. Get radio stations involved at races and health festivals. They will make the event more fun, and raise awareness for activities in your community at the same time

100. Ask local restaurants to encourage customers to choose vegetables as a side dish, or to save calories by choosing mustard instead of mayonnaise

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